

M'sian shares near-death experience in Nepal quake

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Malaysian sales executive, Loy Yun Qing would have lost her life under the rubble of a four-storey restaurant building in Kathmandu if she had not acted fast to exit the building during the massive 7.9 magnitude earthquake that struck Nepal on Saturday.

Loy, 29, escaped the jaws of death in a mere seconds before the restaurant collapsed during the quake that killed 3,218 people and left more than 6,500 injured, while thousands were made homeless in the worst earthquake to hit the country in 81 years.

She was having breakfast with a Chinese national and a male local tourist guide. They were preparing to travel 179 kilometres to Annapurna, a trekking destination.

"I was on the ground floor when suddenly we felt massive tremors. Everybody started screaming and running. I could hear the loud sounds of collapsing buildings nearby while I was running.

"Debris of small stones and glass fell from the sky and nearly hit me as I waded through a sea of panicking people running to a nearby open space," she said when contacted by Bernama, yesterday.

She said as she turned her back she saw all the buildings in the area were destroyed in an instant.

She went back to the rubble of the restaurant and managed to recover her belongings and her passport once the quake settled down.

Ordeal after the quake

Loy, who arrived in Nepal for her first trip on Friday, might have cheated death but her 48-hour ordeal is not over as she endeavours to return home.

It took her hours to arrive at the Tribhuvan international airport, Kathmandu. She said: "It was hard to get transportation to the airport because the locals were trying to escape from the city due to aftershock tremors."

Adding to her tension, she could not book a flight once she arrived at the airport because it was shut down and was only operational on the next day (Sunday).

Moreover, Loy said the airport was flocked with foreign tourists, who wanted to return home, and many of them lost their passports or travel documents in the quake.

She said tourists, who did not have proper travel documents, were not allowed to board their flights while those with proper papers had to wave their tickets just to have access to

the departure hall.

On Sunday, she said it was difficult for her to obtain a flight ticket home as the communication signal on her cellphone was weak for her to make a booking and all the tickets to Malaysia were fully booked.

She had tried for hours to contact her friends and after a friend managed to book a ticket to Malaysia via Bangkok with Thai Airways. The flight was scheduled to take off from Kathmandu in the morning yesterday.

"I almost cried after I managed to get the flight today," she said adding that all the passengers were screaming in joy once the aircraft took off leaving the Himalayan land behind.

Loy believed there were other Malaysians, who could not return home as they lost their travel documents, citing her friend who had yet to return after she went to Nepal a week earlier than her.

- Bernama

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